[33 cont.]

114 117 562 *756 We do not wish to question Professor Métraux's statement about the influence of White contact in relation to medicine-women in the other groups cited by him, as we are not objectively acquainted with them. But with regard to the Guajiro, we have to make the clarification that in the descriptions collected by us in the field, it is precisely the woman who really initiates magic, or better said shamanism, among the Indians, when she obliges her nephew to follow her own career. This aspect can be better understood when the reader comes to the section of this chapter entitled "The shaman in oral literature." [174] The fact that women appear as shamans in oral literature demonstrates the antiquity of the institution, as this literature faithfully preserves the most remote traditions of the group.

*756 The shaman, man of two worlds. All that we have seen in connection with the life cycle of the Guajiro shaman makes us think that he is what we have called him in the subtitle that heads these paragraphs: a man of two worlds — the world of the living and the world of the spirits of the dead. [34]

*756 554 The communication which he establishes after all the preparatory ceremonies with one or several protector spirits who lavish on him every kind of counsel and instruction and even protect him against evil in all its manifestations: illness, enemies, public calamities, etc., make of him a man distinct from all the rest. His status is superior to that of other mortals because in his hands he has power over both good and evil. It is this duality that binds with his science a man who is both sacred and human, a being respected by all but feared at the same time, a good man, able to cure illnesses, but also a malignant being, liable to let loose the fury of the spirits beyond the grave. He is respected, loved, feared, and even, we might dare to say, profoundly hated.

[783] What predominates in him above all is the characteristic of impurity due to contamination from death. Sacred and impure become confounded in him; he is sacred because he is untouchable, and he is untouchable because of his participation with death through his protector spirits.

*756 His dual position as inhabitant of two worlds, involuntary it is true, depends on two fundamentally simple facts: first, his

[38 cont.]

538 medicine man, after his death, and it is only then that he can
*756 himself exercise his profession by himself, having at his service a terrestial intermediary, to whom he communicates by various means his methods of curing, events of the future, etc. This equally confirms our thesis, fully expounded previously, that the shaman is a man of two worlds: the world of the living and the world inhabited by the spirits of the dead. Lastly, it reaffirms what we have said in reply to Métraux's statement, that the feminine institution of shamanism in La Guajira is not due to the influence of European culture (which is only now beginning to be strongly felt) but is as ancient as their oral literature.

• 174 Present position of the shaman. If we consider socio-
565 economic conditions in La Guajira in the Pre-conquest epoch, which placed the natives in a position of a people engaged essentially in hunting and in fishing on the coasts (36), we have to

> 36. Restrepo Tirado says: "The Guajiro and Cocina [Kusina] Indians occupy La Guajira Peninsula. They were nomads and lived by hunting and fishing in improvised encampments, which they moved from one site to another." (Historia de la Provincia de Santa Marta [History of the Province of Santa Marta], 1st, I, 15.)

accept as a fact a virtual equality between the different clans which composed the community. The superiority of one or various clans over the rest was possibly due to their greater aptitudes for war or the greater number of fighting men they had at their command. Riches would be represented by valuable adornments, necklaces of gold or of tuma, pearls, etc. [39]

174 In such a state of affairs under the primitiveness which we
554 can presume existed in the Guajiro community of that time, the
*756 shaman must have occupied the first place in the social hierarchy. His undiminished supernatural powers, his position as intermediary between the community and the world of the dead, the fears which his powers provoked were all sufficient reasons for him to be respected and feared above all and by all.

[49 cont.]
from the menace of death that had weighed on them, and later they were able to raise their domestic animals with greater success than up to then.

Propitiation of the shaman's protector spirit. The sacrifice of animals as propitiation or thanksgiving offering to the spirit or spirits that have taken over the protection of the shaman is fully explained in the previous chapter, for which reason we abstain from making further reference to it.

Conclusions. We have the following facts regarding the place of such sacrifices within Guajiro social organization: (a) Sacrifice of animals, of two kinds: one of a ritual funeral character and the other as a prevention of the fulfillment of dreams. (b) Human sacrifice, which may now be considered to have disappeared due to various circumstances which have already been described. (c) The first two exist at times in their original form, and at other times as mere survivals disguised in social rather than ritualistic forms, as happens for example in the sacrifice of animals during the secondary burial or the wake in the ceremony of the first burial. (d) But in any case the three show a distinct magic nature. (e) With respect to the sacrifice of animals we may suppose that in ancient times the animal sacrificed must have been a wild one from the forest obtained by hunting, as the Guajiro Indians, the same as all Colombian Indians and American Indians in general, were completely without, or almost without, any domestic animals, which were acquired only after the Conquest when the colonizing Spaniards imported them from the [Iberian] Peninsula to set up their ranches; (f) Based on this same socio-economic fact, we may presuppose quite an appreciable change in the content and form of certain types of ceremony, because the passing from one economy to another, particularly when it is so radical as [50] that of the Guajiro, who changed his character of nomad hunter to that of herdsman and stock grazer, implies a very appreciable transformation in the general social organization. (g) In the sacrifice of children, and in that of animals in order to ward off the evils foreseen in dreams, we have to admit the contaminating effect of spilled blood -- a very important taboo in La Guajira -- which increases the malevolent effect of the magic

[52 cont.]

753 lacking this support, certain practices of a magic character
755 which place him – always respecting due proportions – on a
756 plane of equality with the spirit or at least give him the possibility of warding off its harmful effects from him or his fellows. In the methods of healing, as will be seen as we progress in this chapter, the individual makes use, either directly or indirectly through an intermediary – the medicine man in this case, of the benevolent powers of the instrument causing the sickness, or else those of another spirit – under whatsoever materialization – as strong or stronger than the original cause of the sickness, in order to banish the illness.

755 The value of the Guajiro shaman, or medicine man, as
756 a curer, as we were able to observe in Chapter II, lies in the superiority conceded to him through his constant communication with the world of the spirits, which places him, so to speak, on a plane of equality with them. Nevertheless, in the aspect of Guajiro medicine four different factors intervene, which we can define in general as follows:

1) Medicine practiced directly by the shaman through his communication with benevolent spirits.

2) Medicine by divination, dependent or independent of the shaman, which creates another social group, not so clearly defined: that of the diviner.

757 3) Medicine which might be called household, independent of the shaman and of the diviner, which is applied through pragmatic knowledge of the curative value of certain plants, or through the observation of particular customs related to taboo, which as we shall see later, are of a preventative type.

● 174 4) Medicine practiced by foreigners. This last factor must
648 have its origins in ethnographic history, and it appears to us
756 quite difficult to clarify. It deals with the medical intervention of curers from the [53] Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, whom the Guajiro consult in certain cases. These inhabitants of the Sierra belong to native groups included by Professor Rivet in the large Chibcha linguistic family (38). Our supposition of contacts between

38. Rivet, Paul. Conferencias dictadas en el Instituto Etnológico Nacional

2: Pineda Giraldo--60 E-5 (1947) 1960 SC13 Goajiro SC13

[53 cont.]

[Lectures given at the National Ethnological Institute]. Bogotá, 1962.

the two groups at some period of their history, — we cannot say if before or after the Conquest, is based on the presence of certain material cultural techniques of the Arwako [Arhuaco] Indians in the Guajiro group.

Let us now analyse carefully and separately each one of these factors:

Medicine practiced by the shaman. In chapter II of this study, we referred to the shaman's curative methods which are effected through their magic communication with the spirits. These spirits supply the instructions required for the ceremonies and processes that are to be practiced to effect the cures of illnesses caused by the wanurú which have a sick person in their power. We again refer the reader there to chapter II.

Medicine by divination. Before entering fully into this subject, we feel obliged to clarify somewhat the diviner's position in La Guajira and to learn something more, if only superficially, of the processes of divination.

There are certain men and women capable of seeing secret events that have occurred or foreseeing those that will occur. For this they employ different objects; some use a machete (an item of acculturation), and by closely studying its edge they divine, for example, what has happened at the site of a robbery and where the stolen objects will be found. Others make use of burning tobacco and others, finally, of a burning firebrand.

In this aspect of divination the world of the spirits plays as great a role as it does in general in all the themes of magic, since the chain of events in the case of the divination of a robbery, for example, is that the spirit of the diviner disengages itself from his body and goes in search of the lost articles, following the track of the thief until it finds the hiding place and consequently the stolen goods, returning then to the body of the diviner to communicate the result to him so that he can, on his part, transmit the information to the party who has come to consult him. [84]

[105 cont.]

The owners of this idol – that no one is allowed to look at – keep it jealously guarded in a coffer, from which no one can withdraw it. With it they carry out on certain occasions some curious rituals such as carefully washing it and then exposing it to the sun's rays. When the summers are harsh and long, they bathe the idol, which they say makes it happy, and they then can ask it to send rain.

The small number of these little idols and the ignorance of the natives regarding their origin makes us believe that they are a foreign element, at least with regard to formal representation, which we consider to be the product of acculturation. The possibility that these objects have come from the ancient Arhuaco is also very remote, as we have found no trace in the literature dealing with this group of anything similar to such small idols.

Moreover, objects of gold are so few that at present they are restricted to necklaces, which are highly esteemed and inherited through the maternal line. But it appears that previously there were other golden ornaments other than the necklaces, as Ensign José Nicolás de la Rosa affirms that on a certain occasion "all the population of Río de la Hacha went to war against them, and the struggle was so fierce and bloody that the Guajiro asked for a truce, offering never again to act so treacherously toward the subjects of the King of Spain, and as a sign of this intention and as compensation for the death of Tomás (Quintero), they delivered to his Majesty [106] a two-headed golden eagle, the jewel being deposited as a hostage to assure the keeping of the peace in the Royal Treasury." (62)

62. De la Rosa, José Nicolás. Floresta de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Santa Marta [Treasures of the St. Marta Cathedral], 2d., IV, 213.

Up to now we have not been able to discover the historic value of the small idol called guarí or guale, and we continue to incline toward our first opinion that it is a product of acculturation.

[146 cont.]

If we accept the idea that the Guajiro are descended from the Arawak of the Guianas, with whom they are intimately connected both by their language and culture, there is nothing strange to be found in the formation of the name Mareiwa from mali, male (the l and the r do not exist in the Guajiro language), and fwa, words that are used to name stars and in consequence must be related to the general Arawak cosmogony. In any case, the linguistic association of star-rain-god-divinity confirms the statement which we have made that Mareiwa [147] is none other than the propitiatory spirit of the rains, and by the same token, that of good harvests, of abundance, and of well-being.

The harsh geographical conditions of La Guajira and the technical incapacity of the native to dominate and put them in his service without incurring the great inconveniences which are above all occasioned by the climate, have caused this being (Mareiwa) to be raised to first position in the category of protector spirits of the community. Also, the changes brought about in their economy during past centuries have contributed to this advance in status, because since the introduction of stock grazing, winter has become more and more indispensable for the maintenance of pasture, without which the stock would suffer serious losses. We have no data relating to the myths or religion of these Indians at the time of the Conquest but what we have unearthed and the fact that there is a veritable confusion with respect to the origin and functions of Mareiwa point to the fact that, in a certain way, the Guajiro are living in a state of transition with regard to their divinities, we might almost say a moment of true creation of their gods which has not yet been definitively achieved, and for which contact with western civilization has created difficulties which by now are practically insurmountable.

Wanurú. As we referred extensively to the wanurú when we were speaking of sickness and the shaman, we shall add only a few details here and systematize the knowledge we have acquired about this matter up to now.

1. The wanurú can harm the Guajiro bodily and spiritually, bodily by means of such sicknesses as attack men, animals,

5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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An Exploration of the Goajira Peninsula, U.S. of Colombia.

By F. A. A. Simons.

Map, p. 846.

Since the publication of my last paper on the Sierra Nevada in 1881,* I have been commissioned by the National Government of Colombia to survey the two Atlantic States of the Magdalena and Bolivar, and especially to write a report on the hitherto unexplored region of the Goajira Indians. A summary of this I have now the honour of laying before the Royal Geographical Society.

The north-easterly corner of the United States of Colombia (formerly New Granada) terminates in a large peninsula, that, projecting for some 120 miles out into the Caribbean Sea, forms the extensive Gulf of Maracaybo. This peninsula is known as the Goajira. It was ceded by the State of Magdalena in 1872, to form a National Territory, for the better civilisation of its Indians. One half of it, however, is claimed by the Venezuelans, and a dispute that at one time threatened to culminate in war between the two nations, was amicably settled by referring the question to the King of Spain as arbitrator. His decision has not yet been made public. Three-fourths surrounded by sea, the Goajira is on the land, or south-westerly, side separated from the State of the Magdalena by a natural boundary, formed partly by the Rio Ranchería, with the outlying hills of the Nevada, variously called in old maps Cerros de Siblada, de Barranca, &c., and partly by the Montes of Oca.

Very little or nothing is known of the history of these Indians. Although the peninsula played an important part in the first discoveries, none of the early chroniclers seem to have paid much attention to the country. Juan de Castellanos, who resided some time at the Cabo de la Vela, dedicates a "solo canto" to the people. The "Floresta de Santa Marta," written by José Nicolas de la Rosa in 1789, gives many interesting data on the customs and manners of the Indians; this work must have supplied the more recent writings on the subject, for the same errors run through them all. That the present race are not the original inhabitants of the peninsula is certain. The Indians themselves have a legend that they came from a great distance, and are able to point out traces of villages belonging to the former inhabitants, whom they assert are the Arhuacos of the Sierra Nevada. Sometimes their old graves are accidentally come across, yielding to the fortunate finder a rich harvest of stones (pieces of polished stone with a hole drilled through), curiously shaped pieces of gold, and other ornaments (clay), identical with those found in great profusion all over the Sierra Nevada. Now,

* 'Proceedings R. G. S.,' 1881, p. 705.

5:Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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172 these terms are all made from carnelian, jasper, or other reddish variation of silica, and the stone, according to the Indians, is not to be found in the Goajira. While ascending Macuira, several places were pointed out to me, especially near the top, in which I was entreated to look for treasure "of the Arhuacos." They themselves, although coveting terms above everything, are, curiously enough, afraid to look for them, not hesitating, however, to appropriate any found by chance. This, combined with the fear of mentioning their dead, points to some sort of religion or belief in a superior Being. They evidently took possession by conquest, driving the weaker "Arhuacos" out, and have managed to assert their rights to this day. It is rather an historical anomaly that such a small tribe, which probably never exceeded 80,000, should have been able to preserve intact their absolute freedom, their manners and customs uncontaminated, in spite of the accessibility of their territory, surrounded as it is by the sea, and the continual commerce that has been going on for centuries.

Commencing with the topography of the country, the mountain system attracts attention most—more so, as a remarkable error has been propagated, that the Goajira is one large fertile plain with only one or two isolated hills. At least one-half of the country is hilly. There are in fact two Goajiras; one known as the Lower Goajira is the level level plain extending from the river Ranchería to a little beyond the Tota. The other, or Upper, Goajira is the hilly sterile region between the Tota and Punta Espada. The Upper Goajira is simply a volcanic eruption, a conglomeration of low hills, conspicuous from the many cone-shaped forms, and the parallel ridges in which they have been thrown up. These parallel lines run chiefly north-west by south-east, and are separated by two large plains, thus forming three distinct groups of hills running from sea to sea. The first and most important of the three is the easterly or Macuira range. This fine, bold, interesting mountain mass rises in front of Chimare, about 12 miles from the sea-shore, and terminates at the most easterly point of the Goajira, forming the rocky headland known as the Punta Espada (Jarida). Due to its elevation and position, it serves as a species of cloud-trap detaining the lower clouds that drive in from seawards impelled by the easterly or trade winds, that blow here with great force most part of the year. This is the only spot in all the Goajira that can really be called fertile. I ascended the two highest points. The north or Macuira proper lies in front of Punta Estrella, and is composed of several peaks ranging between 2400 and 2600 feet above sea-level. None of them offer any difficulty in climbing, as the slopes are covered with gardens to within 500 feet of the top. The vegetation is similar to that of the Sierra Nevada at 6000 feet, and the temperature was very low, showing at midday 62° Fahr. The highest point at the southern extremity in front of Punta Espada is Ara-ura. Owing to the low dense

9: Santa Cruz E-5 (1958) 1960
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the individual who was to provide the raw material for this article. This is more or less a biography of the man who was at the same time guide, interpreter, and driver for the author and with whom extensive conversations, both formal and informal, took place.[1]

Guajiro culture, like most native cultures in the New World, has suffered great acculturation due to the impact with European ways of life. Some of these cultures have been more resistant to change than others; and within one culture, certain aspects have remained closer to the traditional forms than have others. In Guajiro culture, it is perhaps the social organization, with all of its ramifications, that has resisted recent acculturation more than the other aspects of the culture. We know very little of the pre-cattle culture of the Guajiro and even Juan de Castellanos, writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, describes them as having numerous herds of domestic animals. Nowhere in the literature on the Guajiros is there an example of status having been acquired outside the traditional way and the present writer, in his two field trips to the region, has found only the case here described.

As it is not the purpose of this article to give a full description of the social organization of the Guajiro, it will be sufficient to state that the tribe is divided into some twenty-five matrilineal clans, of which about eleven are large and rather powerful in their socio-economic aspects, and the rest—due mainly to the fact of having a small number of members—are weak, and relatively unimportant. Inheritance is along the mother's line, an individual acquiring property from his maternal uncle. The avunculate in all its social and economic aspects, is a very important institution (Santa Cruz, 1941).

Traditionally the clans are exogamous with incest taboos and punishments for those who break them. This exogamic characteristic of the clan is apparently disappearing, as several cases of endogamous unions were found among the Guajiro living in the outskirts of the city of Maracaibo. No endogamous marriages, however, were found in the Guajiro proper by the present writer, although Gregorio Hernandez de Alba (1936) has

[1] Proper names, especially of the subject, have all been disguised in some way, so as to spare personal feelings.